

Ohio General Assembly
180 East Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Representative Anielski and co-sponsors of House Bill 557,

I am writing in support of House Bill 557, to license and regulate art therapists. As a healthcare professional, you quickly learn that every patient is unique and will require individualized treatment plans of care. As unique as we humans are, utilizing the same treatment course for all patients would be unethical. People tend to learn utilizing different styles: physical, visual, aural, verbal...etc. These learning styles will also change the way a person internally represents certain experiences, the way they will recall information, and even the words they will choose. A highly skilled, licensed, art therapist can utilize alternative outlets for people to use when words, thoughts, and experiences are hard to discuss, explain, or are painful to revisit verbally.

I currently work within the oncology population, in an interdisciplinary clinic to help patients get back to their optimal level of function and to improve their quality of life following a cancer diagnosis, and cancer-related treatments. The art therapist on our team is an essential part of a patient's recovery. She utilizes her skills to allow patients to leave their painful bodies; pain brought on by surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, or the burden of a tumor. She allows her patients to turn their traumatic experiences with a disease they did not choose to have, into an artistic expression of feelings; allows the patients to articulate their loss of quality of life, and loss of function in an alternative way, when words cannot be found to describe their feelings, concerns, and needs.

I would urge the Committee to approve House Bill 557, to allow Ohio to follow suit of fifteen other states in assuring patients that they have access to art therapy services. Art therapy services that come with a professional state license. What comes with a state licensed professional? You are assuring the public that these services follow a precise scope defined by the state, and that the professionals are to follow specific requirements in obtaining their license, and to maintain competency to continue to practice within their field of expertise. State licensure holds the professional accountable to follow ethical standards of conduct, and regulates oversight that assures only the most appropriately trained and educated, and competent, professionals qualify to practice within the field of art therapy in the state.

Thank you,
Andrew Albright, PT, DPT, CLT-LANA
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